

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
APRIL 27, 2020
C14H-1986-0008
SCARBROUGH BUILDING
522 CONGRESS AVENUE

PROPOSAL

Remove plate glass from the Congress Avenue storefront to create a semi-outdoor dining area for a new restaurant and install a new railing at the opening.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

The applicant proposes the removal of the plate glass storefront windows along the Congress Avenue elevation of the building to align with the applicant's restaurant use and create a sheltered outdoor dining area. To separate the dining area from the street, the applicant proposes the installation of a new ornamental metal railing, painted black.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are used to evaluate projects on historic landmarks. The following standards apply to the proposed project:

- 1) *A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.*

Evaluation: The Scarbrough Building housed E.M. Scarbrough & Sons, downtown Austin's premier department store. The plate glass storefronts along Congress Avenue were display windows for their merchandise. The restaurant that has come into the former department store space has removed the plate glass. Besides the attraction of a semi-open air dining area for the restaurant, there does not appear to be any clear need for altering the building by removing the plate glass display windows.

- 2) *The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*

Evaluation: The display windows along Congress Avenue are part of the building's history as a department store. The removal of the windows has compromised the integrity and historical context of the building.

The project does NOT meet the applicable standards.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Not reviewed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Deny the application for the removal of the plate glass and direct that the applicant immediately restore the windows removed without review and approval by the Commission. Condition the applicant's application for a property tax exemption for this property on the restoration of the removed windows.



E-mail from applicant, March 25, 2020:

I am sorry to hear that we missed this requirement when making the submission of this revision to the City of Austin. We did submit a revision to the City of Austin, and received approval without any comments, prior to proceeding with this scope, see attached. It certainly was not our intent to circumvent the process or the Historical Landmark Commission. Please proceed with the placing this on the next agenda for committee review, and let us know if there is additional information required for the review process.

We are currently not in a position, with the state of the restaurant industry we would prefer not to spend the money to put the glass back in, prior to getting the answer from the Historic Landmark Commission. Thanks you for you consideration and help.

Please feel free to reach out to me with further communications, as the other Velvet Taco team members have been furloughed at this time.